



POWERED BY  
FAMILIES OF BELOIT

# A NEW FUTURE FOR BELOIT FAMILIES

A call to action for Rock County systems change,  
created in partnership with Black parents in Beloit

A project in collaboration with





## WHY THIS DOCUMENT EXISTS

The purpose of this Idea Book is to share a community-driven vision of keeping families safely together and to imagine a world where families are never separated by Child Protective Services (CPS). Here, you will find actionable ideas from the perspective of Black families in Beloit that create a beloved community of support. It presents starting points for how Rock County Human Services, and CPS specifically, can become a resource for prevention and support instead of family separation in times of trouble. It also offers a model for engaging and sharing power with families — by centering their expertise and creating change where they say they need it most. It is meant to serve as a guide for staff, system leaders, funders, and community-based providers to set in motion transformation within the community of Beloit, supported by systems change in Rock County.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>PROJECT CONTEXT</b>	01
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<b>OUR VISION</b>	02
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<b>RECOMMENDED IDEAS</b>	03
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<b>DIGGING INTO EARLY SOLUTIONS</b>	04
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## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE & RACE

Because language matters and it is incredibly important for communities to name themselves, this is to explicitly say the language chosen in this Idea Book was guided by the parents, county data and the goals of the work. We recognize the inherent limitations within the English language and the ways racial categories have been used in the United States throughout history to perpetuate harm to certain communities. We further recognize that no one label or category can truly capture the fullness, vibrancy, and unique experience of every family. We invite you to think about the multiple experiences that make every family unique.

# 1 Project Context

## A BROADER CHANGE EFFORT

As part of the Family First Prevention Services legislation effort, the Rock County CPS Department began a journey of change when it launched **Rock Families First** in 2021. Supported by a partnership with Alia, the department declared goals to:



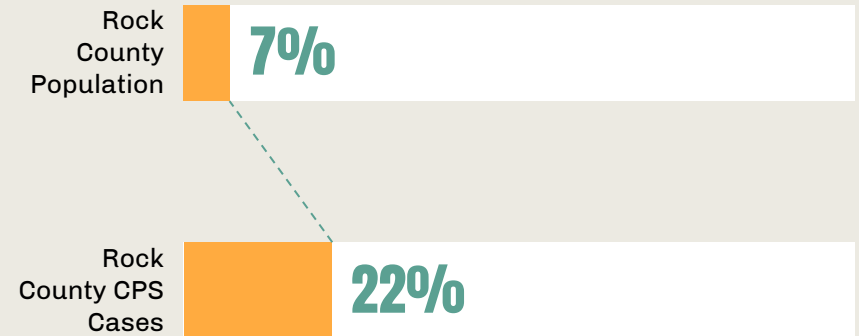
ELIMINATE  
RACIAL DISPARITY  
IN CHILD  
PROTECTIVE  
SERVICES

REDUCE THE  
NUMBER OF  
CHILDREN PLACED  
OUT OF HOME

ENGAGE WITH  
FAMILIES WITH  
INCREASED  
SATISFACTION

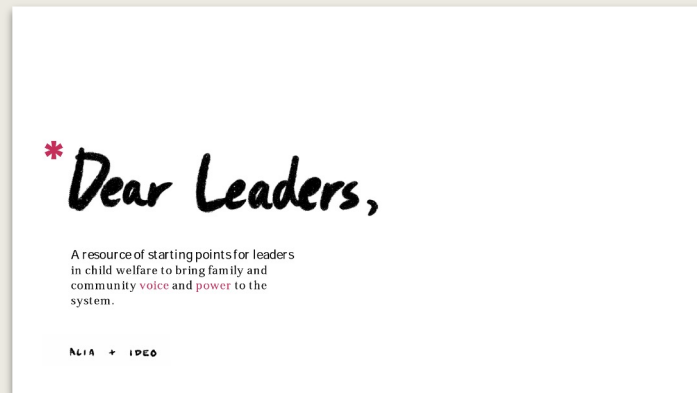
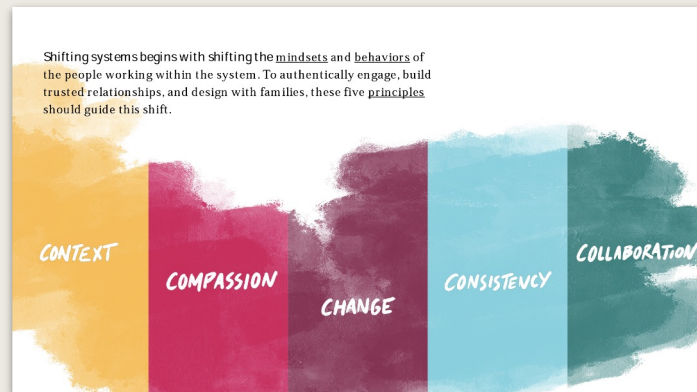
## THE DATA BEHIND OUR FOCUS AND OUR WHY

This project intentionally focused on Black parents and their experiences of the Rock County Child Protective Services (CPS) system. Data from the county shows that Black families are overrepresented in CPS investigations and family separations. While Black folks make up 7% of the Rock County population, they represent 22% of all CPS cases. The system's reach and harm disproportionately affects Black communities; as such, it was pertinent that this project centered and elevated their concerns from the outset. Prioritizing the needs and elevating the experiences of Black parents in Beloit —those most impacted by the system — is the most direct and equitable way to ensure all families feel seen, supported, and valued.



## OUR WORK IN PREPARATION FOR COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Work over the past year has included leadership and strategy development, training, and disparity data inquiry. We explored staff mindsets related to racial equity goals with a co-designed framework called [\*Dear Leaders\*](#): *A resource of starting points for leaders in child welfare to bring family voice and power to the system.* We examined practice and systems approaches that could be barriers and opportunities for change. A Community Cultivator was also hired and supported to engage the Black community in Beloit as the County began to intentionally center efforts on those most impacted by the system. Another pivotal part of this project was working toward co-designing with parents and staff, supported by IDEO.org to help uncover new solutions.



# THE OPPORTUNITY

for change through  
co-design

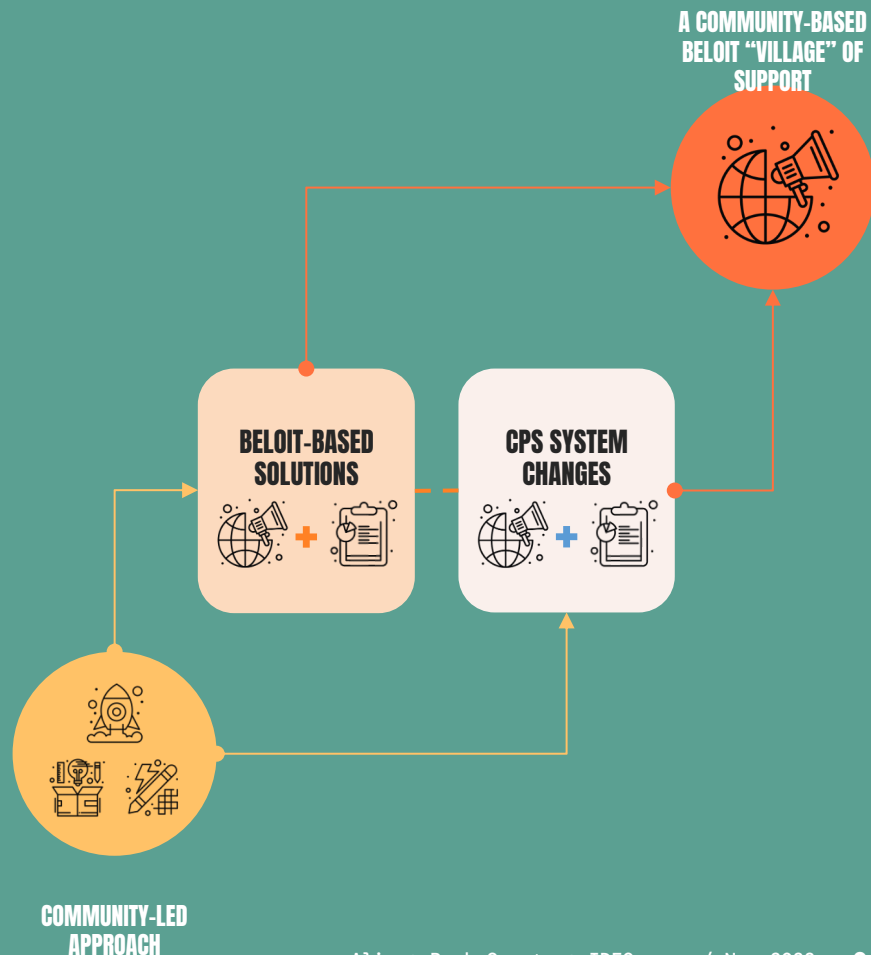
The ultimate hope for our co-design work is that we create a future where, when families struggle, as all families inevitably might, they can get the support they need to stay safely together. Both the broader Beloit community and the Rock County Human Services system - including Child Protective Services (CPS) - have a critical role to play in realizing that hope.



In order to meet the opportunity for change, a broader systems lens was applied to the project — **focusing beyond CPS to understand how a community-based approach, along with Rock County systems change, could help disrupt the overrepresentation. This means:**

1. Creating space for parents to speak to their vision, and take the lead on both internal and external initiatives
2. Identifying where and how the Rock County system needs to shift within Human Services and CPS

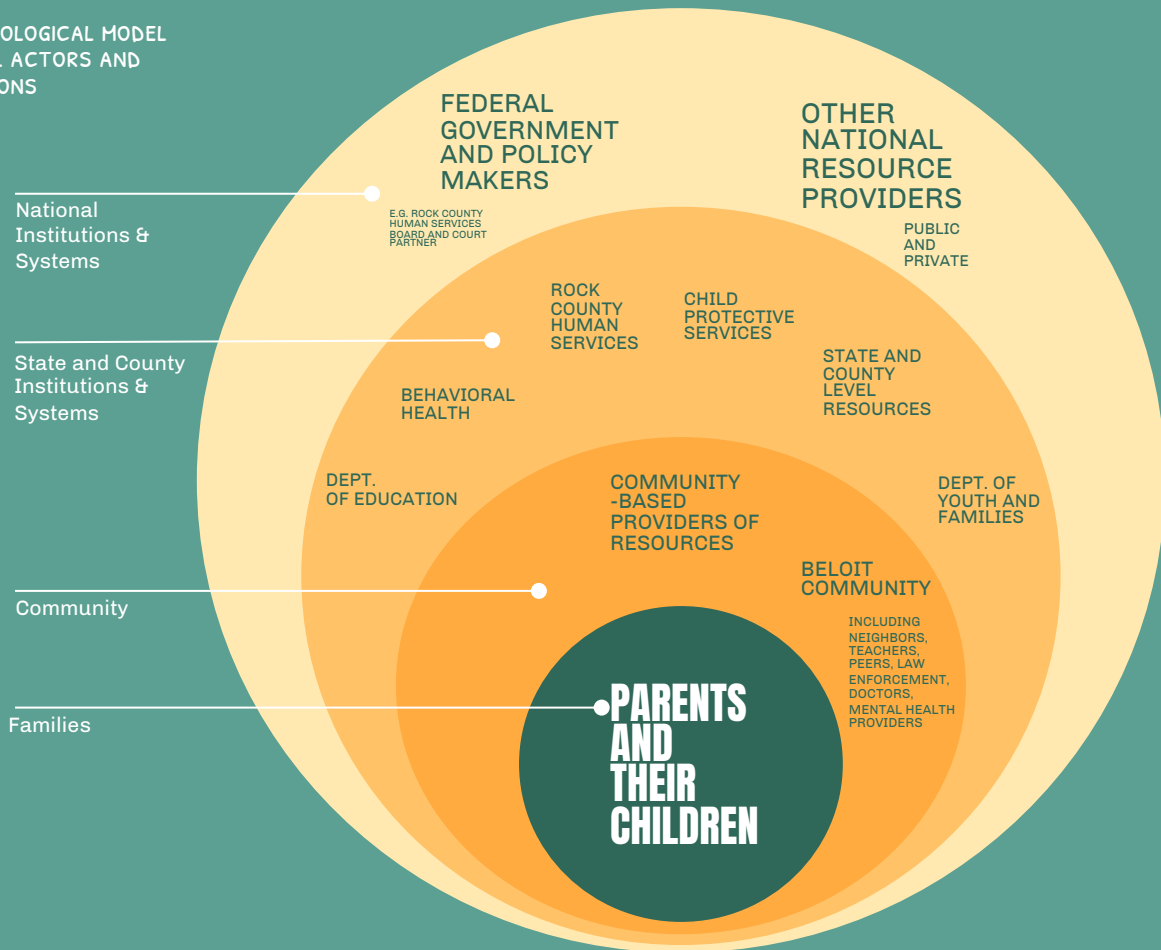
Throughout the process, parents spoke to a need for community-led and community-owned support networks. **Their vision is of a community-based Beloit “village” of support.**



## ROCK COUNTY'S LANDSCAPE FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

Creating a future where families can safely stay together through a village of support cannot be reinforced by the Rock County Child Protective Services system alone. There are multiple stakeholders and partners that need to be involved — lifting up the Beloit community and preventing CPS involvement in the lives of families.

### SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF SOCIAL ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

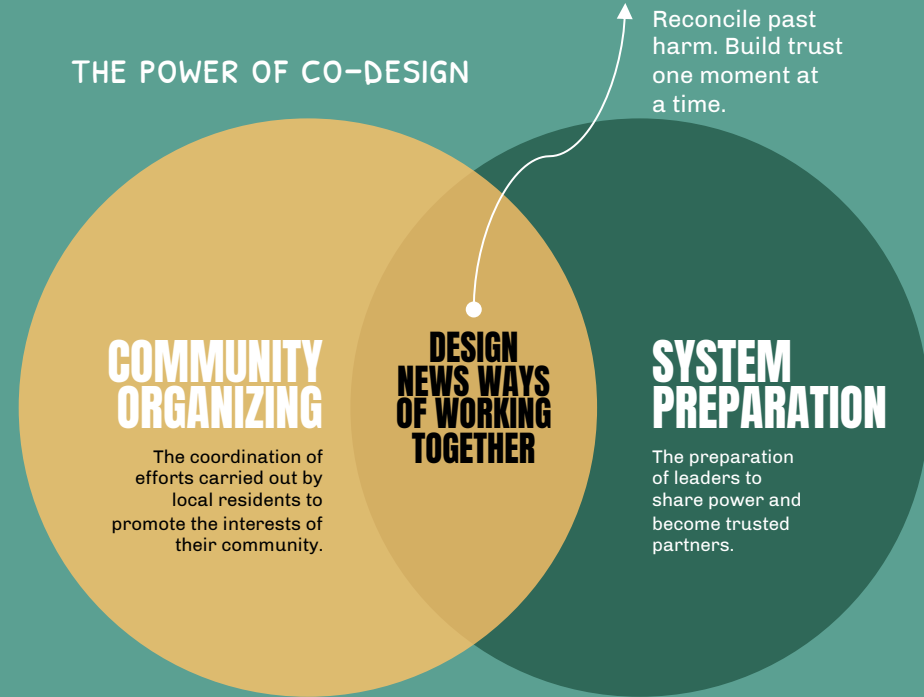


## CO-DESIGN

To create a vision that centered the desires and aspirations of Black parents and families impacted by CPS — and to ensure we could identify tangible starting points both inside and outside the current systems and contexts — we brought families and CPS staff *together* to collaborate and co-design these new possibilities.

This work takes all of us.

## THE POWER OF CO-DESIGN



# Example of Reconciliation: Apology & Commitment to Action

## From Katherine Luster, Rock County Human Services Director...

*I want to acknowledge that in our work through Child Protective Services we have failed at times to live up to our mission which means that we have failed you, your families and your children. On behalf of the Human Services Department and our current staff and behalf of those who served in these roles in the past, I want to say I am sorry.*

- *Our mission statement says that we build upon strengths, and for the examples where instead of building upon strengths we highlighted deficits and problems, I want to say I'm sorry.*
- *Our mission statement says that we promote independence by providing quality services. For the times in which we failed to set families up for successful independence because we did not assure that quality services were available, and then punished parents for not progressing quickly enough, I am sorry. For times when we failed to listen to what you said you needed and instead made plans based on our determination of what was best for you, I am sorry.*
- *Our mission says that we demonstrate respect for the Dignity of all people served. For the times where instead of demonstrating a respect for your dignity actions were taken that were more of an assault on the Dignity of families and on the bonds between parents and children, I'm sorry. For the examples in which respect for dignity was outweighed by personal and systemic biases toward Black Families, I am sorry.*

*I acknowledge the harm done to you, your children and your families by practices that have not consistently served to keep families strong and connected.*

*I can't go back and undo the past, but I am here tonight making a commitment to use my role and influence in whatever way I can to help us do better. And in that spirit I invite you to hold me and the HSD accountable to make positive changes; hold us accountable to consistently meet our mission.*

## OUR APPROACH

This work was developed together with **17** Beloit-based parents impacted by the Rock County child welfare system, and **8** staff members of Rock County Child Protective Services.

We held **over 17 collaborative sessions\*** with parents and Rock County staff who volunteered to participate, including one-on-one conversations, small group discussions, onboarding sessions, and 5 initial co-design workshops.

*\*Sessions were supported by a combination of IDEO.org and Alia facilitation*

## DESIGNERS

# 17

Parents impacted by the CPS system

# 8

Staff members from Rock County Child Protective Services

## PREPARATION

# 17

Collaborative sessions with impacted parents and child protective services staff

## CO-DESIGN

# 10

Day co-design sprint with impacted parents and child protective services staff



# Our Vision

*“Nothing about us, without us”*

Our Call to Action of the System  
as Parents of Beloit



WE ARE THE MOVEMENT.

OUR PEOPLE ARE  
AMAZING, BEAUTIFUL  
FULL OF RESILIENCE  
FULL OF SPIRIT  
AND CREATING CHANGE.

BUT WE NEED THE  
SYSTEM TO CHANGE.

FOR TOO LONG, BLACK FAMILIES  
HAVE BEEN DISPROPORTIONATELY  
IMPACTED BY THE CHILD WELFARE  
SYSTEM AND EXCLUDED FROM THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM IT.

UNTIL NOW.



Over the course of 5 co-design workshops, county staff and families impacted by CPS came together to imagine what could be — and to create starting points for bringing a shared vision to life.



THAT VISION IS TO BUILD  
A VILLAGE THAT  
SUPPORTS EACH OTHER  
WITH CARE AND  
COMPASSION.



Because we want to live in a world where when families struggle, as all families might, we have the agency, voice, resources, supports, and strengths to stay safely together.

IN THIS VILLAGE, WE ANCHOR ON

PATHWAYS FOR PREVENTION,  
STABILITY, AND GROWTH  
MADE FOR US, BY US.



IN THIS VILLAGE, WE ANCHOR ON

COMPASSION, CARE, AND  
CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING.



IN THIS VILLAGE, WE ANCHOR ON

RESPONDING TO WHAT  
FAMILIES SAY AND NEED.



IN THIS VILLAGE, WE ANCHOR ON

MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION  
AMONGST EVERYONE WHO CARES  
FOR THAT CHILD AND FAMILY.



IN THIS VILLAGE, WE ANCHOR ON

LOVE. WE AMPLIFY  
STRENGTH, JOY, AND  
POSSIBILITY.



WE ARE NOT OUR CIRCUMSTANCES.  
WE ARE GREAT PARENTS WHO DEEPLY LOVE  
OUR KIDS. WE ARE MOVING THROUGH LIFE'S  
STRUGGLES WITH OUR FAMILIES, JUST LIKE  
YOU. AND WE HAVE STRENGTH, JUST LIKE  
YOU. WE ARE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO  
CARE, AND WE BELIEVE OUR CHILDREN ARE  
SAFEST AND HAPPIEST WHEN THEY ARE WITH  
THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITY.

Beloit



Beloit is our home. We want to give our home the investment, intention, and care it deserves. It will take a village — parents, kids, teachers, social workers, administrators, mental health professionals — to make our community whole.

Let's put our hope into action and  
expect the unexpected!

# 3 RECOMMENDED IDEAS



## ROCK COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHANGE

These recommended ideas were generated by parents and staff together through co-design as ways to get to the vision articulated in this Idea Book. We are presenting them for increased accountability within Rock County to the community; to ensure families have access to what they need to succeed. **If some of the ideas seem radical, it is because, in a lot of ways, they are. The term radical means to grasp at the root or impact at a fundamental level. These ideas are brought forward by Beloit parents to solve for the root cause of why families struggle in their community.** They offer a roadmap to a vision that focuses on supporting families and, whenever possible, keeping them safely together. As we explore legal mechanisms, review policies, seek creative funding and transform processes together, over time, they will lead to a future where families not only stay together...but thrive together.

Some of the recommended efforts will be within Rock County's responsibility and accountability to change, and some will require collaborative effort with the community of parents and families. **Everyone involved with this process is committed to lift these ideas into action with urgency.**



Our vision is to create a community-led and owned “village” of support in Beloit that helps families stay safely together. Our purpose is to break intergenerational cycles and provide paths for stability and mobility to the families historically most impacted by CPS.

Our village comprises 4 key solution areas that collectively house many community initiatives and systems change starting points for Rock County.

WELCOME TO THE  
*Beloit*  
VILLAGE OF SUPPORT

CREATING STABILITY  
AND MOBILITY FOR  
FAMILIES



PROVIDING A ONE-STOP-  
SHOP PLACE FOR  
SUPPORT



BUILDING A  
COMMUNITY-LED  
PEER RESPONSE



BUILDING COMMUNITY  
AWARENESS THROUGH  
OUTREACH



In the following section, we'll bring to life each of the solution areas in the village through the perspective of an illustrative family of Beloit.



We introduce the vision of each solution with recommendations for Beloit-based initiatives and their corresponding systems change implications, including how these collective changes address the core goals of Rock Families First.

We then dig deeper through the perspective of the “Johnson Family”, and introduce key components and operational considerations to realize this vision.



## Meet the Johnson Family

BELOIT  
RESIDENTS  
SINCE 1992

Terri is a mother of two vivacious, joyful children. She and her partner Peter have lived their whole lives in Beloit. The road may have been bumpy at times, but through the support and care of their collective village, they are able to navigate and grow past setbacks to break generational trauma, heal, and give their kids the space to dream.



# Digging into Solutions



IN THE BELOIT COMMUNITY...

Empower a **Village Network** of community-based experts and peers (including neighbors, friends and chosen family) that parents can voluntarily access as their primary source of support. This network of support can be built from existing opportunities such as parent groups and community organizational support.



SYSTEM CHANGE

Within Rock County, and especially CPS, flip the script and lead engagement as family supporters. Train staff at intake to ask parents about their needs first, training community members who report most, like law enforcement, teachers, and medical providers, to provide support before reporting. Convert investigation roles into family support roles. Hire from the Black community in Beloit, and root roles in trauma-responsive and cultural relevance training.

GOALS	HOW THIS SOLUTION SUPPORTS THE GOAL
Eliminate racial disparity in CPS	Reduces the need for CPS response and over-involvement in Black families.
Reduce the number of children placed out of home	Looks to existing trusted relationships to prevent and address crisis, keeping children within their community.
Increase engagement and satisfaction for families	Empowers peers with cultural understanding and shared lived experience to drive and improve family engagement.



# The Johnson Family's experience

## Hears about it

Terri has long struggled with anxiety, depression, and sobriety — and sometimes the stress of life, parenting and work can make her feel exceptionally exhausted. A teacher notices how the struggles are impacting her child. Instead of calling CPS, she connects Terri to a peer network of support that consists of community members who are family supporters and have similar lived experiences.



## Gets connected

Terri calls the hotline to get connected to this network of peer support and specialists in Beloit. Through the hotline, she meets a Community Cultivator who invites her to come to the local mom's group with her.



## Finds support

At the local mom's group Terri makes meaningful connections with other moms and gets connected to counseling support.



# Getting to our solution

## Family Supporters

Convert CPS roles to supportive instead of investigative. Scale family supporter training to existing 'mandated reporters' in Beloit, e.g. leverage teacher in-service days and offer public Zooms to law enforcement.

## Community Coaches & Peers

Formalize a network of coaches - Beloit parents and peers who can be engaged to walk side-by-side with parents through life's challenges.

## A Peer Hotline

Launch a hotline with a community partner or network of community volunteers and then begin diverting CPS support calls to the hotline.

## De-escalation Coaching

Crisis is not entirely avoidable. Equip Community Coaches and Peers to help parents in crisis through individuals with trauma-responsive training to de-escalate conflicts and get parents immediate support so they can feel safe.

## Resource Navigating

Equip a variety of formal and informal roles in the Village Network to facilitate connections with community-based resources.

## Life Coaching

Create formal partnerships with existing life coaches and counselors who can offer coaching and trainings to Beloit parents who will act as Community Coaches to serve as mentors and advocates for their peers. Enlist parents who have overcome similar challenges to coach others.

**SOLUTION:**  
Community-led response strengthens families and prevents CPS involvement.

## Support Groups

Connect parents to existing support groups, e.g. mom's group.

WE ARE  
HERE!



## Roles in the Village Network

At the heart of this effort is creating a movement of people to put the village approach into action - the Village Network. Because of this, there were many different roles and functions imagined, including new ways for existing CPS roles to work, and ways to activate support from existing community-based organizations and peers.

When possible, formal roles within CPS and Rock County should hire from the Black community in Beloit for maximum cultural connection and understanding. All roles should be trained to be trauma-responsive and strength-based (meaning leading conversations with people's strengths and what they have, rather than what they lack).

The informal network of community-based peers in the Village Network can be made up of existing people in the community who are intentionally resourced, supported and engaged.

**New roles do not necessarily need to be created. Helpers are already present in the community. They need to be identified and connected!**

### “Family Supporters”

*Roles in Rock County that support before or instead of report and investigate*

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*Existing Roles within Rock County to be transformed:*

- Family Preservation Specialists (other human service department prevention roles)
- Parent Partners
- Community Cultivators
- Mandated Reporters shift to a family supporter / defender mindset (i.e. law enforcement, teachers, doctors)

### “Community Coaches & Peers”

*Community-led roles who can be engaged to walk side-by-side with parents through life challenges*

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*Peers who are or are trained to be:*

- Life Coaches, Counselors and Pastors
- Peer Coaches, from within the Village of Support, trained to support resource navigation and de-escalation
- Parent Leaders and co-designers to influence initiatives

## What Rock County can do now

### IDEA 1

SUPPORT BEFORE REPORT –  
TRAINING TO SHIFT THE  
MINDSET OF MANDATED  
REPORTERS IN BELOIT



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

Does providing “family supporter training” for mandated reporters, prompting them to support before reporting, disrupt entry into the CPS system and improve access to community-led peer support?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

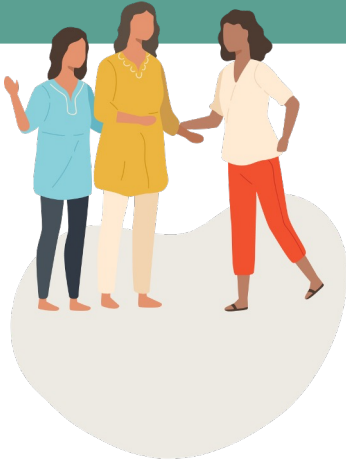
Based on data, identify mandated reporter groups in the Beloit community with the highest rates of reports to CPS. Help those who are mandated reporters to see themselves in a support role before reporting, as legal limits allow. Organize ongoing training both in-person and over Zoom for groups such as teachers, law enforcement, and medical and mental health providers to become family supporters. When reports must be made, family supporters would work to maintain a collaborative approach with the family even after the report is made.

### EARLY METRICS

- # of Support Cases vs. Report Cases
- # of reported cases by high-reporting individuals
- # of decreased CPS investigations over time
- Attendance to support-based trainings
- Additional requests for support-based training

## What Rock County can do now

**IDEA 2**  
FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM –  
EXPAND AND CONVERT  
CPS ROLES TO SUPPORT



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

Does building a Beloit-based team of peer support improve access to help, prevent crisis, and reduce entry into the CPS system for families?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

Hire Beloit-based CPS Family Preservation Specialists from, and targeted to support, the Black community in Beloit. Reallocate Initial Assessment Specialists to the support team in order to expand its functionality. Work with Parent Partners to ensure their team is set up to hire from within the Black community in Beloit and available to parents *before*, as well as during crisis. Model prevention roles after the Community Cultivator role in Beloit to anchor engagement and align both services and supports to best match parent needs.

### EARLY METRICS

- # of Support Cases vs. Report Cases
- # of parents identified and connected to help by Family Preservation Specialists and Community Cultivators
- # of parents paired with Parent Partners
- # of decreased CPS investigations over time
- Qualitative success stories of parents helped by the Support Unit



#### IN THE BELOIT COMMUNITY...

Build awareness on how to support parents by educating the community. Share parent success stories in local media outlets and in places parents gather, such as churches and schools. Launch a marketing campaign with local partners centered on providing families support, and educating families on their own rights. Leverage Family Supporters rooted in the community to spread awareness.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

TO BUILD AWARENESS  
AND CONNECTIONS



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

TO BUILD AWARENESS  
AND CONNECTIONS

## SYSTEM CHANGE

As a primarily Beloit-based initiative, provide the content, funding and sponsorship support to local campaigns, as well as to community leaders to lead the outreach movement. Equip the Beloit-based support team and family supporters to help get the word out.

GOALS	HOW THIS SOLUTION SUPPORTS THE GOAL
Eliminate racial disparity in Child Protective Services	Equips Black families in Beloit with alternatives to CPS involvement.
Reduce the number of children placed out of home	Teaches the community how they can connect parents to support averting crisis and thus keeping families together.
Increase engagement and satisfaction for families	Centers families in the outreach and messaging to the community, improving family engagement.

# The Johnson Family's experience

## Hears about it

Terri watches a piece in the local news about a neighbor who, through the help of a Community Cultivator, got access to housing, counseling and job training, which opened new pathways for them and their family.



## Builds awareness

A Community Cultivator and neighbors attend Terri's local church to give a talk after the sermon about how they were able to get connected to these life-changing supports, inspiring Terri to meet and talk to the Community Cultivator about other neighbors who could benefit too (*including herself*).



## Spread the word

Working with local shop owners, Terri helps hang posters about ways to help families before calling CPS. Working with her children's elementary school, she helps distribute Family Orientation booklets on family rights and family support information for parents and their children.





# Getting to our solution

*Have begun to build Village Network*

## Success Stories

Post in media outlets and host talks about local success stories of parents getting support from the Village Network.

## Awareness Campaign

Design a campaign, including posters, social media posts, influencers, to shift the narrative around Beloit families, bringing awareness to local issues, and educating community members on how to support families (vs. reporting).

## Virtual Village

Use social media technology to support awareness of resources and supports (people and places). Use the platform to strengthen how the village of support gets connected in online and in real time.

## Family Bill of Rights

Build into the Virtual Village and community-based campaign key elements for parents and youth to give them back power. For example, work with Community Coaches & Peers in the Village Network and social media influencers to promote and educate parents and youth on their rights when it comes to getting support and CPS interactions.

## Community Orientations

Share educational content with parents, their children, and their community on how to access and get support through additional place-based channels, e.g. orientation booklets in schools. Ensure mandated reporters are re-trained as Family Supporters.

**SOLUTION:**  
Community awareness and connections build and expand.

WE ARE  
HERE!



## What Rock County can do now



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

Would a campaign with success stories promoting new narratives around supporting Beloit families shift community mindsets, reduce CPS cases reported, and improve family access to support?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

Partner with a local design company and the Village Network of support to develop a community-centered campaign including parent success stories. Identify and shape success stories of parents who received support and were able to stay together. Sponsor talks with parents in local churches, create posters, draft social media posts and/or a partner with a local influencer to spark conversations that shift the narrative around Beloit families and bring awareness to how to support them (vs. report them).

### EARLY METRICS

- # of Support cases vs. Report cases
- Who in the community-based referrals for support
- Feedback and qualitative conversations with parent co-designers and community members joining the campaign

## What Rock County can do now



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

Would a social media platform improve awareness and community advocacy for supporting parents and families? Would it better equip parents to access support and understand their rights?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

Work with Community Coaches & Peers in the Village Network to create a Facebook page, Instagram account or Tik Tok. These platforms would be used to post knowledge, videos, links and quick sources of information for parents and their peers to learn about supports available to families and about their rights as they relate to the CPS system.

### EARLY METRICS

Engagement metrics - members and followers of the page,  
views, likes and clicks of posts and videos  
Posts by other peers and parents  
# of parents accessing support  
Qualitative data on parent awareness of resources and rights



## STABILITY AND MOBILITY

### IN THE BELOIT COMMUNITY...

Work with the Village Network roles trained to navigate and improve access to supports that address both short-term needs and long-term growth for systematically excluded and under-invested families. Improve access to resources - including counseling, housing, financial help, and respite - that provide stability in the near-term, so families have the ability to take advantage of capacity-building resources, such as education and job training in the long-term.



# STABILITY AND MOBILITY

## SYSTEM CHANGE

For Rock County, this means building partnerships with resource providers. Family Supporters can help Community Coaches and Peers connect parents to vetted, trusted community resources; and co-build plans of support that center their personal strengths and goals. It also means exploring ways to help families who have already been impacted by past CPS interactions, by offering a means of healing and resources to help them equitably “catch up” socially and economically.

GOALS	HOW THIS SOLUTION SUPPORTS THE GOAL
Eliminate racial disparity in child protective services	Invests in building equity for historically disenfranchised families.
Reduce the number of children placed out of home	Provides families a means to avoid crisis, or otherwise keep their children within trusted community.
Increase engagement and satisfaction for families	Provides affirming, parent-centered support that aligns to their goals and strengths.

# The Johnson Family's experience

## Reaches out

Terri feels that she and Peter are always playing catch-up, pouring hours into their jobs and raising their kids, but barely making enough to pay rent. Fearful that they might lose their home, she gets connected through a peer to a Rock County service meant to provide personalized help.



## Builds a Plan

A Rock County specialist discusses Terri's immediate concerns and long-term goals. She helps Terri quickly apply for rent relief through a trusted organization, and later helps her build a personal roadmap towards greater job and financial security.



## Check-ins

Feeling affirmed and supported, Terri is determined to meet her long-term goals. She regularly checks in with her specialist as an accountability buddy, getting connected with short-term help as needed. This short-term help allows her to focus on her long-term goal of getting a certification to access a higher paying role at work.



## Gets Respite

She even gets connected with a place where she can temporarily leave her kids to take a break and focus on her personal self-care, counseling, and recharge during difficult times.



# Getting to our solution

## Family Care Mapping

A care map co-created with parents to identify who parents would entrust care of their child (e.g. within family and friends) in case of crisis or questions of safety.

## Access to Resources & Support

A resource network of community-based services to address immediate and long-term needs for families including housing, financial aid, rights advocacy, youth programming, education, job training and more. Access to resources to avert crisis that could lead to reporting.

## Access to Respite Services

As part of the resource network, offer referrals to places where parents can find trusted emergency or temporary care for their kids, to give them a breather or to give them space to address urgent issues.

## Family Success Plan

A parent-led, vision-based roadmap designed with parents aligned to a parent's or family's long-term goals for success. The plan would include resources selected from the menu of services.

## Peer Support & Advocacy

Work with folks in the Village Network to help parents overcome challenges and crisis through rights advocacy to reach their short-term goals and stay on track toward their long-term vision.

## Family Re-Investment Fund

A fund to re-invest in and support families after CPS involvement. It would provide culturally responsive care and services that can be accessed by families to further their journey in healing from trauma.

**SOLUTION:**  
Parents on a path to increased stability & social mobility

WE ARE  
HERE!



## What Rock County can do now



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

Can we expand a network of resources targeted to what families need? Would more partnerships with trusted community providers improve parents' access to help?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

Many resources already exist but prove difficult for parents to access. Some resources are present but need to grow to meet the opportunity. Start conversations with resource providers in Beloit to understand and address barriers to access. Curate a network of resources to connect parents to short and long-term support. Seek partners including rent relief and temporary housing, food and basic necessities, mental health counseling and coaching, education opportunities and job training. Allocate resources to grow partnerships that are successful at meeting needs, supporting stability and mobility.

### EARLY METRICS

- # of parents successfully serviced and supported by community resources
- # of referrals to resources
- Qualitative feedback and testimonials by families



## What Rock County can do now

IDEA 2  
FAMILY-LED PLANNING  
TOOLS



KEY LEARNING QUESTION

Would a family-led, vision-based proactive planning tool help more families avoid crisis and CPS involvement?

PILOT DESCRIPTION

Develop templates, tools, and methods for the Village Network (Family Defender and Community Coaches) to help parents explore what kind of help they need and stay focused on their family-driven goals. This is not a case plan or a safety plan, as these are compliance-based system tools. This plan creates personalized roadmaps towards the family's long-term goals toward an identified vision while offering access to tangible supports along the way.

EARLY METRICS

- # parents who opt-in to build personalized success plans
- Outcomes of parents with success plans
- Reduction in CPS investigation cases
- Increase in CPS support cases
- Connection to and use of resources
- % and # of goals met



#### IN THE BELOIT COMMUNITY...

Launch or partner with a Beloit-based physical center that parents can come to before or during crisis for judgment-free, holistic support. This is not your typical family resource center - it's designed intentionally with parent experience and access in mind. The vision is a place families can go for support rather than fear of being reported to CPS. It is a one-stop-shop hub staffed and supported by the Village Network, centering parents' needs, where parents can tap into the resource network, seek respite and temporary care for their kids, and de-escalating or preventing crisis. The center's services can also be mobile, going to parent neighborhoods to meet them where they're at.



# ONE-STOP-SHOP

## PLACE FOR SUPPORT

### SYSTEM CHANGE

For Rock County, it means partnering with local resource centers, staffing them and providing the tools and resources to support parent needs. Explore ways to offer supports that ensure family safety without the need for surveillance during times of crisis, within legal parameters. It also means working regularly with the community-led peer network to understand what would help parents avoid or address crisis.

GOALS	HOW THIS SOLUTION SUPPORTS THE GOAL
Eliminate racial disparity in child protective services	Provides alternatives to CPS involvement to prevent or address crisis based in the community.
Reduce the number of children placed out of home	Provides a place for respite and temporary care of kids so parents can seek help, avoid crisis and stay with their kids.
Increase engagement and satisfaction for families	Provides a place that centers parent experiences and needs, building trust and positive engagement over time.

# The Johnson Family's experience

## Hears about it

Terri is going through a difficult period, overwhelmed by work, financial stress, her kids, and her relationship with Peter. Her neighbor, who is part of a special community-led support network in Beloit, tells her about a center with no judgment where she can get help and a restful break if it ever gets to be too much.



## Visits

When the stress of life gets to be too much one day, and Terri feels the weight of her depression and anxiety, she decides to visit the resource center with her kids. She's greeted warmly in this soothing, thoughtfully decorated place, and offered tea. Her kids are taken to a play area to be looked after by licensed daycare professionals she recognizes from Beloit to give her some rest.



## Gets help

A resource navigator comes to chat with Terri after she settles in, offering her a literal menu of services, ranging from self-care, to counseling, to short and long-term resources. She and Terri have a conversation about what she needs and begin family success planning. Terri begins to feel a weight lifted off her shoulders.



# Getting to our solution

*Have begun building Resource Network and Village Network*

## Village Center for Support

A center accessible to Beloit families and parents that is funded and designated in such a way that parents can come for care and support without fear of being reported to CPS.

## Calming, Supportive Environment

Interior decor intentionally designed to be soothing, and calming for parents. Trained staff from the Community-Led Peer Network and Resource Navigators are available for conversations and help.

## Menu of Services

A menu providing a range of trauma-informed and confidential resources and self-care options from the Resource Network, including everything from addiction support, family and youth counseling, family advocacy, to life coaching.

## Family & Youth Programming

Events geared towards hosting community groups, such as the local mom & dad groups, youth groups, and family events, like movie nights, Black businesses expos, and intimate gospel concerts. Additionally, the center would host specific programs for youth around career development, back-to-school events, education, and healing.

## Childcare and Respite Onsite

A trusted place for parents to find temporary childcare, or even spend a night if needed before or during a crisis.

## Mobile Support

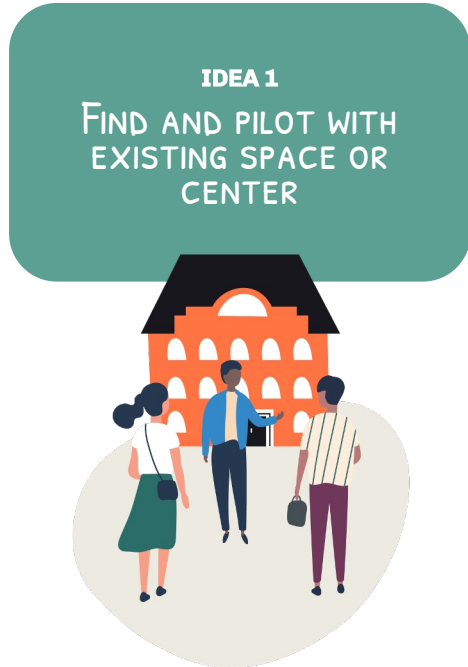
A beautiful, mobile resource center staffed by Resource Navigators that visits Beloit neighborhoods to provide counseling and the menu of services. It aims to both increase awareness of the physical center and to reach more families.

**SOLUTION:**  
A place for trusted referral to help, and for rest and respite

WE ARE  
HERE!



## What Rock County can do now



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

What does the space need to look and feel like for parents to feel safe, welcomed, and supported?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

Identify, partner, or contract with a location that can serve as a pilot for the one-stop-shop physical center. Working with Community Coaches and Peers, set up, furnish, and equip the space according to what would help parents feel, welcomed and supported. This could include: parent-centered color palettes, comfortable furniture, affirming infographics on the walls, plants and other greenery, parent-centered music, greeters and orientations when parents arrive, and snacks and drinks.

### EARLY METRICS

# Visitors to the space  
Flow - which parts of the space are used / not used  
Qualitative Feedback on the environment by parents

## What Rock County can do now

**IDEA 2**  
**CREATE A PILOT ON-SITE  
MENU FOR THE RESOURCE  
NETWORK**



### KEY LEARNING QUESTION

What kinds of on-site services or resources would parents like to access in a space?

### PILOT DESCRIPTION

Provide printed menus of vetted, curated resources in the center - handing them to parents, leaving them on table and posting them on the walls. Provide contacts: direct numbers and emails to the resource providers, the Peer Hotline, and a Human Services number. Invite the Resource Providers to staff the space for consultations. Note which resources parents are most reaching out to or requesting, and adjust the menu according to what parents say they need or would like most.

### EARLY METRICS

Resources parents most request or reach out to from the menu  
Resources parents successfully get connected to  
Qualitative feedback on what help is most needed through the center

WELCOME TO THE  
*Beloit*  
VILLAGE OF SUPPORT

CREATING STABILITY  
AND MOBILITY FOR  
FAMILIES



PROVIDING A ONE-STOP-  
SHOP PLACE FOR  
SUPPORT



BUILDING A  
COMMUNITY-LED  
PEER RESPONSE



BUILDING COMMUNITY  
AWARENESS THROUGH  
OUTREACH





THROUGH THE VILLAGE, TERRI AND HER  
FAMILY ARE ABLE TO ACCESS ABUNDANT  
SUPPORT CENTERED ON THEIR LONG-  
TERM WELLBEING.

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“  
**TRUST  
THE  
PROGRESS**  
”

*Parent Co-designer*



We have our ideas and solutions.  
We have tangible starting points.

We know the possibility of  
what awaits on the other side.

Now is the moment to keep moving.

**Will you join us?**

# APPENDIX

# Operational Priorities and Next Steps for Beloit-based Parent Leaders

Initiative | People | Partnerships / Funding | Legal



Work in Progress

Community-Led Peer Response (e.g. Village Network)

Community Outreach (e.g. community-led campaign)

Stability and Mobility (e.g. Resource Network)

One-stop-Shop (e.g. the Village Center)

## Beloit-based Parent Leaders

### First Priority: Activate a Parent Co-designers / Leadership Council

- Identify hiring roles in the Village Network to be the Family Supporters and Community Coaches, and recruit from Beloit.
- Partner with Rock County CPS and Human Services to inform community-led peer response model including how CPS roles become family supporters.
- Co-create family supporter training with County GPS staff, as part of mandated reporting training.

- Partner with legal counsel and form an advocacy network to help families understand their rights and entitlements as it relates to their children.
- Partner with design experts to identify gaps in community awareness and narratives that need to shift, and co-design and launch a ground-up campaign to shift narratives.
- As part of the campaign, work within the Village Network to identify and draft success stories (of parents supported by the Village).

- Inform resources that should be part of a network readily available for parents.
- Develop family success planning tools, and consider partnering with CPS to inform family safety plans and case plans, as they relate to the family success planning tools.
- Develop a respite care network among trusted adults within the community, funded by Human Services or another organization.

- Partner with Human Services / CPS to identify, resource and design a center for parents to access the Village Network and Resource Network.
- Design or partner with local community leaders and organizations to provide programming to families and youth.
- Continuously update and print a menu of services reflecting available help and programming at the center.
- Staff the center from the Village Network to guide parent conversations and connect them to help.

# Operational Priorities and Next Steps for Rock County Systems

Initiative | People | Partnerships / Funding | Legal

Work in Progress



Community-Led Peer Response (e.g. Village Network)

Community Outreach (e.g. community-led campaign)

Stability and Mobility (e.g. Resource Network)

One-stop-Shop (e.g. the Village Center)

## Rock County Systems

**First priority:**  
Formalize engagement models for parent co-designers. Continue regular co-design sessions to develop the peer network and bring parent influence into the change process

### Community-Led Response

- Establish ways to compensate parent co-designers continued involvement to inform and lead community-led solutions and to provide broader input into training and case work within CPS.
- Seek diverse and innovative funding streams that can support compensation for parent-led roles, new hiring and training, including private and public philanthropy.
- Partner with parents to explore alternative interpretations to existing policies and propose new policies that create foundations for a community-led response.
- Seek partnership / sponsorship to expand or launch a support hotline, staffed by Rock County or compensated parents.
- Create formal partnerships with existing life coaches and counselors that can offer coaching and trainings to Beloit parents who are Community Coaches.

### Family Support in Rock County

- Reallocate (e.g. Initial Assessment Workers) and hire additional family support roles from Beloit (e.g. Family Preservation Specialists, Community Cultivators) to a support/prevention unit in Rock County - consider creative options for position descriptions within Wisconsin State Standards.
- Expose more Rock County / CPS staff to the co-design experience and human-centered design mindsets.
- Co-create family supporter training with parents, (as part of mandated reporter training) and conduct analysis on who are the highest mandated reporters to organize a targeted training.

- Fund and support parents and design experts to launch a ground-up campaign to shift narratives.
- Identify local organizations that can support channels for outreach - i.e. schools, businesses, media outlets, and develop marketing partnerships.
- Explore the legal implications and limitations to sharing and speaking to parent success stories and other messaging.
- Provide leadership development resources and coaching to parent leaders serving on this campaign, e.g. fund parents' attendance to a public speaking or writing seminar if they choose.

- Identify and develop partnerships with community-based providers for resource, respite and healing that can support families and youth in Beloit.
- Better understand and work to remove barriers for families to access existing resources, including policies that could be updated, eliminated or created.
- Formalize a database for parents and staff to be able to easily connect parents to resources.
- Provide training to Community Coaches to be Resource Navigators and to facilitate parent-led conversations on family success planning.
- Organize more resource fairs with local Beloit resource providers.
- Seek funding for reinvesting in families that have already been impacted by CPS.
- Seek flexible funding that could support an informal respite care network for families.

- Identify or partner with a location that can serve as a pilot for the one-stop-shop physical center.
- Seek creative funding to sponsor the location, resource it with the Village Network, and sponsor community-led programming in the location.
- Work with the Village Network to fund menus of services reflecting programming and help available through the Resource Network.
- Seek legal means to support on-site respite and childcare.
- Seek creative partnerships and funding to resource and launch a mobile version of the center.



Parent Council taking lead and informing Beloit-Based initiatives; Human Services and CPS supporting with systems change



# The Blueprint

Start Here

- Support Groups
- Community Coaches & Peers
- Family Supporters

(1a) Develop the Village Network of support

Start Here

- Resource Network
- Access to Respite Services
- Family Care Mapping

(1b) Begin identifying partnerships to build a Resource Network for Beloit families

- Awareness Campaign
- Success Stories

(2a) Work with Village Network to lead a ground-up campaign

(2b) As the Resource Network is developed, look for a place to pilot the Village Center for support

A Peer Hotline  
(3a) Launch a hotline to more easily reach the Village Network

- Family Success Plan
- Peer Support & Advocacy

(3b) Build tools to equip the Village Network to facilitate vision-led family success planning and advocacy

- Village Center for Support
- Calming, Supportive Environment
- Menu of Services

(3c) Develop a menu of services based on the Resource Network so that the Village Network can refer parents at the center for support

- Resource Navigating
- Life Coaching
- De-escalation Coaching

(4) With a resource network in place, provide additional training to support coaching and resource navigation

- Virtual Village
- Family Bill of Rights
- Community Orientations

(5a) With the Community Coaches and Peers, launch a platform for a virtual village including campaign messaging, center programming, more information on family and youth rights and distribute through community channels / orientations

- Family & Youth Programming
- Respite and Childcare

(5b) Once the center is established and staffed, build out family and youth programming at the center, and look to offer respite and childcare onsite

(6a) When access to stabilizing and mobilizing resources is improved to prevent crisis and keep families together, explore a reinvestment fund for helping families heal who've already been involved in CPS

Family Reinvestment Fund

Mobile Support

(6b) With ongoing access to the menu of resources and established programming, begin to offer a mobile version of the center's services in local neighborhoods